



"THE INNER DOOR," by Alan Sullivan. Gundy, \$1.35.

Canadian novelists are not numerous. Canadian story-writers are legion. How a novelist begins to be made in this country is illustrated in the case of "The Inner Door," by Alan Sullivan, which recently ran as a serial in Munsey's. It is a story of labour and capital and love. The author has drawn pretty well on his own experiences in factory life as well as an engineer for his material and local colour. He depends upon his imagination for the chief characters. The story is of a young man, Kenneth Landon, in love with Sylvia Percival, owner of a big rubber factory. Conditions in this factory are bad. Kenneth determines to study them. Under an assumed name, while his prospective fiancée is in Europe, he enters the factory as a dinner-pail employee. He goes to live at the house of Sohmer, a big Socialist leader and father of Greta, who recognizes in Landon "her man." Love and industry begin to get crossed. There is trouble brewing. A big strike is called. Landon is called to be on the side of labour. But he already expects to marry capital. Does he? How and why he does not, but succumbs to the woman who recognized him as "her man" makes the bulk of the story, in which there is a good deal of very realistic writing, much insight into industrial conditions, no account whatever of how any one thing in this rubber factory is made, some tragic and some highly melodramatic situations, plenty of action, a good deal of higher criticism, love-making and no end of expectations many of which are unrealized by the reader. Poor Sohmer is shot in the strike. Landon gets into a quandary but does not work himself out of it by any self-development. The work is really a novel-sketch, not a novel. Some day from material such as this the author may produce a real novel. But he will make more use of his real experience and take more time to work it out.

"POEMS FROM THE PRESS," by Henry A. Ashmead. Toronto, The Hunter-Rose Co., Limited. \$1.00.

In the June number of the Canadian Magazine a Mr. Gordon wrote some "Comments on Canadian Poetry," in which he deprecates the lack of some critical standard by which to rate the performance. That is, alas, too true. Anything that comes from the press is hailed as great because it strikes the "national" note, no matter how cracked the sound it gives forth.

Were there such standards a poor reviewer's life would not be plagued by such effusions as compose the volume under review. It is a very simple matter to find these standards. As long ago as the seventeenth century Milton laid it down that poetry must be simple, sensuous and passionate, and he, after all, was but echoing the voice of the past. He was expressing in seventeenth century English the canon of the old Latin poet

Horace, that "poetry must handle universal themes and the thoughts of all men with an individual turn which makes them its own," and that "it must not merely be 'fine,' it must have sweetness and charm." And he but followed Plato and Aristotle.

If our budding poets and poetesses, discarding the advice of their worst enemies, their friends, would apply these standards to their own work, much good paper would be saved and, what is much more important, the published output would be a valuable contribution to literature. But, as Mr. Gordon laments, neither poets nor critics have any standard by which to estimate the quality of the work.

Were I to place Mr. Ashmead's work, I should say it belonged to that school—long since believed dead—which sang of the commonplace in verse even more commonplace than the subject and in which Elizabeth Cook and Dr. Watts were bright particular stars.

Another fatal defect of some Canadian writing—be it in the form of prose or verse—is the use of words without a knowledge of what they mean. In his poem, "The Robin," Mr. Ashmead speaks of "the everglades of Kew." A glance at the dictionary would have told him that an everglade is a marshy tract of land. It is many years since I was at Kew Gardens, but unless I am very much mistaken this description is wholly inapplicable.

"BILINGUAL SCHOOLS IN CANADA," by C. B. Sissons. J. M. Dent & Sons, Toronto. \$1.35.

The place of a second language in the schools of our country is one of the acute problems of our national life calling for a broad statesmanlike settlement. In its most acute form it resolves itself into a struggle between Quebec and Ontario and furnishes the opponents of conscription in the former province with an excuse for opposing any participation in the war. In the West there was, not so very long ago, a demand for German schools. That was before the war, but it was the logical outcome of the official recognition by the governments of some of the provinces of the demand that German should be placed on an equal footing with English. The question is old and deep-seated, and can never be settled satisfactorily until our statesmen thoroughly master it in all its phases from its very beginnings. It is not a mere affair of school masters to be settled by Departments of Education. It goes further than that, it touches the very core of our national life, and is there a matter for the people themselves demanding their most serious thought and their utmost goodwill.

In providing us, as he has done, with a complete history of the agitation from its first appearance to the present time, Mr. Sissons has performed a valuable service to the nation, all the more valuable because he has dealt with the matter in a fair,



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